

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 00822 260636Z

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ACTION SS-25

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R 260530Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9399

I FO RUEHBAC/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2960

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 0822

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS INFORMATION TO

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD AND

SECDEF WASHDC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ANZUS, MNUC, PARM, NZ

SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR FREE ZONE (SPNFZ)

REF: A. CANBERRA 1839

B. WELLINGTON 0525

1. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY REPORT (REFTEL A) THAT WHITLAM DID NOT SUPPORT ROWLING INITIATIVES ON SPNFZ. HOWEVER, WE NOTE THAT ROWLING IN HIS MARCH 24 SPEECH TO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PRESS CLUB PUBLICLY CALLED FOR NUCLEAR FREE AREA. HE REPORTEDLY STATED QTE WE WANT FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARDS NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT. OBVIOUSLY IT MUST BE A STEP BY STEP PROCEDURE. ONE OF THE MORE PROMISING AVENUES IS THE CONCEPT OF NUCLEAR FREE AREAS. THE LATIN AMERICANS HAVE ACHIEVED SOMETHING WORTHWHILE. THERE ARE MOVES, WHICH CONCERN AUSTRALIA DIRCTLY, TO MAKE THE INDIAN OCEAN A ZONE OF PEACE. PERHAPS TH TIME HAS COME TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE POSSIBLILITY OF DOING THE SAME IN OUR OWN IMMEDIATE AREA. END QTE. IN ADDITION, UPON RETURN TO WELLINGTON PRIMIN HELD PRESS CONFERENCE ON MORNING MARCH 25 DURING WHICH HE WAS ASKED IF HE HAD REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH WHITLAM ON SPNFZ AND WOULD HE PROPOSE TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 WELLIN 00822 260636Z

DISCUSS THIS WITH THE AMERICANS IN THE FORTHCOMING ANZUS

COUNCIL MEETING. ROWLING REPLIED AS FOLLOWS QTE. NO. THE ANSWER TO THE LAST QUESTION IS THAT I DON'T THINK, THAT'S ALL I CAN SAY AT THIS STAGE, THAT IT'S NOT FEATURED ON THE AGENDA AT THE MOMENT AT THE ANZUS MEETING. IT WAS DISCUSSED ONLY IN QUITE GENERAL TERMS YESTERDAY. NEW ZEALAND'S VIEW IS FAIRLY STRONG ON THIS AND I THINK WE WOULD BE LOOKING RATHER TO THE UNITED NATIONS AS THE SUPPORTING BODY WITH ANY PROPOSAL THAT WE BRING FORWARD ON THE NUCLEAR FREE QUESTION. ALSO ON MARCH 25 GOVERNOR-GENERAL SPEAKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN HIS SPEECH FROM THE THRONE AT OPENING OF PARLIAMENT STATED QTE IT (NEW ZEALAND) WILL PURSUE ITS ATTEMPT TO SECURE AGREEMENT ON ESTABLISHING THE SOUTH PACIFIC AS A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE. END QTE.

2. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION WITH SECDEF ROBERTSON, I GAINED THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT WHILE WHITLAM PREVAILED UPON ROWLING NOT TO RAISE THE SPNFZ ISSUE AT JAMAICA OR WASHINGTON AND MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHOULD GNZ PROPOSE SPNFZ RESOLUTION IN UN AUSTRALIA WOULD NOT CO-SPONSOR OR WOULD NOT SPEAK IN FAVOR, GOA WOULD IN FINAL ANALYSIS PROBABLY GIVE PASSIVE SUPPORT AT UN.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT ROWLING IS PURSUING SPNFZ MAINLY FOR LOCAL POLITICAL GAIN, PARTICULARLY TO MAINTAIN SUPPORT OF FORMER KIRK FOLLOWERS AND LEFTIST WITHIN THE LABOUR PARTY. IT IS APPARENT THAT ROWLING IS HAVING SOME PROBLEMS WITH HIS CABINET AND PARTY. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SUTCH OFFICIAL SECRETS CASE (REFTEL B) PRIME MINISTER AND HIS DEPUTY TIZARD HAVE OPENLY DIFFERED ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS) AND THE RAMIFICATIONS OF SUTCH'S ALLEGED ACTIVITIES. ONE OF THE PRIMARY REASONS WHY ROWLING HAS CHOSEN NOT TO ATTEND THE ANZUS COUNCIL MEETING HAS BEEN, IN OUR OPINION, THE NEED TO THROW A BONE TO TIZARD AFTER CHASTISING HIM IN PUBLIC OVER HIS REMARKS ON SUTCH AND THE SIS. TIZARD THUS WILL BE GOING TO MANILA AT THE TIME OF THE ANZUS MEETING TO CHAIR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ADB.

4. WITH NATIONAL ELECTIONS DUE IN NOVEMBER ROWLING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 WELLIN 00822 260636Z

WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO MAKE SOME SORT OF SPLASH AT THE UN IN SEPTEMBER WHICH WOULD GIVE HIM STATURE AND VOTES IN NEW ZEALAND. UNFORTUNATELY ROWLING HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HE IS BEING ADVISED IN THIS MATTER BY MFA SECRETARY FRANK CORNER WHO IS PUSHING THE SPNFZ AND TREATING THE SUBJECT IN AN EXTREMELY EVASIVE MANNER AS FAR AS THIS EMBASSY IS CONCERNED.

5. ONE IMPORTANT THING WE LEARNED DURING THE RECENT VISIT OF DEPSECDEF CLEMENTS IS THAT ROWLING RESPONDS TO FRANK AND DIRECT TALK. THIS BEING THE CASE, I RECOMMEND THAT IN MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT AND SENIOR US OFFICIALS DURING HIS SHORT MAY 7 VISIT TO WASHINGTON ROWLING BE POLITELY BUT FIRMLY REMINDED THAT AS AN ANZUS ALLY NEW ZEALAND HAS COMMITMENTS UNDER THE ARTICLES OF THE TREATY TO ASSIST IN THE COMMON DEFENSE OF THE SIGNATORS AN THIS INCLUDES PROVIDING OF PORTS FOR OCCASIONAL NPW VISITS NOW THAT THE LIABILITY QUESTION HAS BEEN SETTLED. IN ADDITION, I FURTHER RECOMMEND US OPPOSITION TO SPNFZ AND OUR REASONS FOR SUCH OPPOSITION BE SPELLED OUT TO THE PRIME MINISTER.
SELDEN

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED TO ANY OF ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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